

need the clear convictions of truth and duty, and the ardent aspiration after holiness which come from eager searching and devout contemplation of the Word of Life, to give wings to our prayers.

THIRD.—*Selfishness.*

“Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” [pleasures] (James iv. 3). When we ask for personal blessings, there is danger of asking for personal reasons. The Lord delights to bless me, but not merely to please me. We are apt to be more anxious to be happy than to be holy. Desires must often be denied, in order to promote holiness; for this is a far better thing, and without which indeed there can be no happiness.

II. SOME THINGS THAT SEASON PRAYER.

FIRST.—*A sense of need.*

Peter's prayer as he was sinking, “Lord, save or I perish,” illustrates this quality. The publican's “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” is a model for all sinners. Great blessings, in order to be great blessings to us, must be greatly desired by us.

SECOND.—*Humility.*

What we most need we least deserve. The pardon of our sins, the cleansing of our hearts, the strengthening of our spirit, are great blessings, are greatly needed, and should be ardently desired; but such is our ill-deserts, that they cannot be sought in any but the most humble attitude of soul.

THIRD.—*Faith.*

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” There can be no real coming to God in prayer without “believing that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.” Neither can we really ask, except as we believe that He has provided in Christ the supply for our need. The sinking apostle not only felt his danger, but believed that Jesus could save.

It is the prayer of faith that saves. Now, the record of the words and acts of our Lord is given, that we may believe in his ability and willingness to meet the deepest needs of our souls.

FOURTH.—*Earnestness.*

There is much listless praying that avails little; but the fervent or “earnest prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Paul besought the Roman Christians to strive together with him in prayer to God for him that he might be successful in his mission to Jerusalem (Rom. xv. 30, 31). Epaphras “always laboured fervently in prayers” for the Christians in Colosse. This striving in prayers, fervently labouring in prayers, God has always honoured.

A careful perusal of the Word will enable the reader to extend greatly, to his edification, the list of things that season prayer.

III. SOME ENCOURAGEMENTS TO PRAYER.

God has made *asking* a condition upon which He will give us what we need. He does not surrender His sovereignty in doing so; He simply has ordained this as His way.

FIRST.—He promises to give *wisdom* in answer to prayer.

To know His Son as our Saviour, is the highest wisdom; it is life and peace. Through Him to have a knowledge of sins forgiven, is blessed wisdom.

SECOND.—*Grace sufficient to bear what God does not see fit to remove of earthly trial and sorrow*, is a very precious thing He gives to them that ask them. He has promised it in 2 Cor. xii. 7.

THIRD.—He promises *His Spirit to help us to pray*; so that we may pray in the Spirit.

FOURTH.—God is *pleased* with the prayers of His people. “He heareth the prayer of the righteous.” “The prayer of the upright is His delight.” “He will regard the prayer of the destitute.”—*Baptist Union.*